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AUTHOR Smith, Carol; Dyer, Carolyn Stewart
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ABSTRACT

This historiographic essay discusses and seeks to begin to address the need for a business history of the newspaper. The paper's first section clarifies the terms "business history," "economic history," "political history," and "history of economics," (which the paper suggests have been used interchangeably in the past despite the fact that they are not synonymous). This section extrapolates from the principal discipline of business history to construct a framework for the issues the business history of the newspaper would address. The paper's second section (through a partial review of the literature which concentrates on the scattered journal articles that historians frequently seem to overlook) reveals that while a substantial amount of work does need to be done in the business history of the newspaper, a body of knowledge on a broad range of the important issues exists and awaits historians' attention, criticism, and additions. One hundred eighty-eight notes are included. An appendix contains a six-page bibliography of the research published in scholarly journals. (SR)

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TAKING STOCK, PLACING ORDERS:
A HISTORIOGRAPHIC ESSAY
ON THE BUSINESS HISTORY OF THE NEWSPAPER

By

Carol Smith
School of Journalism
University of Oregon
Eugene, OR 97403

and

Carolyn Stewart Dyer
School of Journalism and Mass Communication
The University of Iowa
Iowa City, IA 52242

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Carolyn Stewart Dyer

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INTRODUCTION

One of journalism history's most important touchstones is the published version of a presentation given thirty years ago to the Committee on History during the annual AEJ convention: Allan Nevins' "American Journalism and its Historical Treatment." The recently retired Columbia University historian opened his remarks by posing the question of how the record of journalism should be written. "As a chapter in our culture? As a striking part of American business enterprise? Or in relation to the workings of democratic government?" While saying that histories "in all three lights" were necessary, Nevins privileged a journalism history that would take its orientation from American political history. "Sound historical works on the press and its leaders are as important to the United States as sound works on presidents and cabinet officers, generals and admirals, inventors and industrialists," he wrote.¹ A considerable number of individual and newspaper biographies followed.

A call for the writing of the cultural history of journalism came fifteen years later, from James Carey, in the published version of remarks that, like Nevins', had also been given to a group of

¹ Allan Nevins, "American Journalism and its Historical Treatment," Journalism Quarterly, 36 (Fall 1959): 411-422, 519.

journalism historians gathered at a summertime AEJ convention.

"Prior--both logically and chronologically--to journalism['s] being an institution, or business, or a set of rights, or a body of technology, journalism is a cultural act, a literary act," Carey wrote. A genre of writing "parallel to the novel, the essay and the scientific report," journalism has evolved over time into its present peculiar character; it is "as much a product of industrialization as tin cans."²

Another fifteen years have passed, and another group of journalism historians have gathered in the heat of August. Isn't it time we got down to business?

Journalism historiographers have for a long time been considering the need for what has been termed variously a "history of newspapers as business institutions,"³ a history of the "economics of the press,"⁴ "studies of the political-economic lives of units of the mass media,"⁵ an "economic history of the communications media,"⁶ an "economic history of the press,"⁷ a "history of the press as a business enterprise,"⁸ a history of "media economics,"⁹ "economic

2 James W. Carey, "The Problem of Journalism History," *Journalism History* 1 (Spring 1974): 3-5, 27.

3 Nevins, "American Journalism," 421.

4 John D. Stevens and Donald L. Shaw, "Research Needs in Communications History: A Survey of Teachers," *Journalism Quarterly* 45 (Autumn 1968): 547-549.

5 William E. Ames and Dwight L. Teeter, "Politics, Economics, and the Mass Media." In *Mass Media and the National Experience: Essays in Communications History*, eds. Ronald T. Farrar and John D. Stevens. (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 38-63.

6 Ames and Teeter, "Politics, Economics," 40.

7 Carey, "Problem," 4; John D. Stevens and Hazel Dicken Garcia, *Communication History* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1980), 56.

8 Edwin Emery, "History is Alive and Well," *Journalism History* 8 (Autumn-Winter): 80-81.

9 "A Conversation With Edwin Emery," *Journalism History* 7 (Spring 1980): 20-23.

studies in journalism history,"¹⁰ and a "business history of American newspapers."¹¹ Nevins wrote in 1959 that the need for such a history, important because the financial record of newspapers "bears on their stability and their independence," was "as yet badly met."¹² John Stevens and Donald Shaw reported in 1968 that journalism history teachers considered economics the field's most desperate need.¹³ William Ames and Dwight Teeter declared in 1971 that if we were to see the media "more nearly whole in historical terms," the "economic dimension must no longer be neglected."¹⁴ And Hazel Dicken Garcia, noting in 1980 that journalism history also lacked substantive work in the political, social, intellectual and technological dimensions, wrote: "Newspaper economics are barely studied in the twentieth century, for which data are available. But economic history of the press has been almost ignored."¹⁵

With the exception of Nevins, who called for accounts of "circulation revenue, advertising revenue, profits and losses,"¹⁶ and Ames and Teeter, who very tentatively sketched out economic history as "being much more than ledgers and balance sheets" and including "such matters as circulation patterns and the changing relationships between media and government,"¹⁷ journalism historians who have called for such research have neglected to define their terms. This confusing

10 David Paul Nord, "What We Can Do For Them: Journalism History and the History Profession," Journalism History 9 (Summer 1982): 56-60.

11 David Paul Nord, "The Business Values of American Newspapers: The 19th Century Watershed in Chicago," Journalism Quarterly 61 (Summer 1984): 265-273.

12 Nevins, 421.

13 Stevens and Shaw, "Research Needs," 548.

14 Ames and Teeter, "Politics, Economics," 39

15 Stevens and Dicken Garcia, Communication History, 56.

16 Nevins, 421.

17 Ames and Teeter, "Politics, Economics," 44.

array of terminology seems to refer somehow to the activities of newspapers relating to dollars and cents. But this is as far as it goes. Despite the perceived urgency of the research need, the nature of the intellectual problem has yet to be articulated. And the need, meanwhile, has become even more urgent; in the absence of a coherent body of research, those who study modern newspapers are relying on myths and metaphors and unsupported generalizations as the basis for their understanding of the development of the industry.¹⁸ For example: Economists have generally portrayed the newspaper industry in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as one made up almost exclusively of independently operated newspaper firms, but research by Carolyn Stewart Dyer into Wisconsin frontier papers has shown that 100 of the 400 papers published between 1833 and 1860 had been members of newspaper groups.¹⁹ John Lavine and Daniel Wackman have argued that the application of the marketing perspective, a strategy in which "media firms began to identify customers' needs and desires first; then they tailored news, entertainment and advertising to match consumer interests," came "to media companies later than it did to many industries."²⁰ But Nickiann Fleener's study of a campaign by the

18 Carolyn Stewart Dyer, "The Business History of the Antebellum Wisconsin Newspaper, 1833-1860: A Study of Concentration of Ownership and Diversity" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin--Madison, 1978), 1. Some of the findings of this study are reported in Dyer, "Economic Dependence and Concentration of Ownership Among Antebellum Wisconsin Newspapers," Journalism History 7 (Summer 1980): 42-46. For examples see Benjamin M. Compaine, "Newspapers," Who Owns the Media? Concentration of Ownership in the Mass Communications Industry (New York: Harmony Books, 1979), 11-59; Bruce M. Owen, Economics and Freedom of Expression: Media Structure and the First Amendment (Cambridge, MA: Ballinger, 1975).

19 See Owen, Economics and Freedom, 37-48; Dyer, "Economic Dependence."

20 John M. Lavine and Daniel B. Wackman, Managing Media Organizations (New York: Longman, 1988), 253-254. Also see William A.

Pittsburgh Courier to increase circulation in 1935 shows the operation of a marketing perspective,²¹ suggesting that the newspaper industry may not have suffered from "marketing myopia" to the extent thought.

This historiographical essay attempts to make a constructive intervention at this juncture. One objective is to heed Dicken Garcia's observation that one of journalism history's "gravest deficiencies" is its lack of a critical historiography that would provide "guidance for avoiding past mistakes" as well as provide "stimuli for discovering news avenues of inquiry and designing appropriate research questions, methods, and models."²² This essay will attempt to undertake some of these tasks for the business history of the newspaper in the following manner. First, it will attempt to clarify the terms "business history," "economic history," "political economy," and "history of economics," which seem to have been used interchangeably despite the fact that they are not synonymous. If we adopt the terminology current today, there could be an economic history of the newspaper, a business history of the newspaper, a political economy of the newspaper, and a history of newspaper economics, but the problems they would deal with and the intellectual approaches they would take to accomplish them would be distinctly different. What most journalism historians seem to have had in mind is a business history of the newspaper. Second, this paper will show that there has been a considerable amount of research on the history of the newspaper publishing business, although it generally has not

Mindak, "Do Newspaper Publishers Suffer from 'Marketing Myopia'?" Journalism Quarterly 42 (Summer 1965): 433-442.

21 Nickiann Fleener, "'Breaking Down Resistance': Marketing the 1935 Pittsburgh Courier to Mississippi Blacks," Journalism History 13 (Autumn-Winter 1986): 78-85.

22 Stevens and Dicken Garcia, Communication History, 15.

been presented as such; a bibliography of this research published in the disciplinary journals is included. Third, in order to identify the approaches that have proven most fruitful and the topical areas that especially need historians' attention, this paper will attempt to map out this literature. Toward this end a programmatic framework for the business history of the newspaper is offered.

WHAT BUSINESS ARE WE IN?:

A CLARIFICATION OF HISTORIOGRAPHIC TERMS

The special session on "Economic History of Journalism" arranged by Owen Johnson for the AEJMC Convention in Norman, Oklahoma, in 1986 featured three papers: a study of the advertising practices of abortionists in antebellum New York City, principally those of one "Madame Restell";²³ a study that explained the rise of sports and sporting news in the 1920s by drawing on theories of monopoly capitalism;²⁴ and a study of how the patronage purse strings seem to have been pulled as a means of keeping a political press editor in line.²⁵ Carolyn Stewart Dyer, chair of the session and respondent to all the papers, opened her remarks with a comment that an economic historian probably would fail to recognize in these papers anything

23 Marvin N. Olasky, "Advertising Abortion During the 1830s and 1840s: Madame Restell Builds A Business." (Presented to the History Division, AEJMC Convention, Norman, OK, August, 1986). Subsequently published in Journalism History 13 (Summer 1986): 49-55.

24 Robert W. McChesney, "Sport and Newspaper in the 1920s: A Political Economic Interpretation of the Symbiotic Relationship" (Paper presented to the History Division, AEJMC Convention, Norman, OK, August, 1986).

25 Robert Stewart, "Patronage and Editorial Control in the Early 19th Century Political Press: Stephen Simpson and the Columbian Observer" Paper presented to the History Division, AEJMC Convention, Norman, OK, August, 1986).

that was germane to the discipline, due to the radical reorientation toward theory testing taken since the 1960s.²⁶ The paper session exemplified a problem that has kept journalism history in the backwaters of inquiry, journalism historians' "neglect of broader historiography."²⁷

By attending to the literature of the history of economics we can begin to understand the differences between "economic history," "business history," "political economy," and the "history of economics." By following a process of elimination, it will become evident that journalism historians who have called for "economic" research on the newspaper seem largely to have had business history in mind.

The History of Newspaper Economics

Modern economics is the social science that, broadly speaking, "deals with the ways in which men and societies seek to satisfy their material needs and desires, since the means at their disposal do not permit them to do so completely,"²⁸ and narrowly speaking, deals with "the production, distribution, exchange, and consumption of goods and services."²⁹ The discipline today is characterized by great specialization, extending far beyond the commonly known subdisciplines of macroeconomics and microeconomics into such areas as econometrics,

26 Carolyn Stewart Dyer, "Comments on the Economic History of Journalism" (Comments delivered to the History Division, AEJMC Convention, Norman, OK, August, 1986).

27 Stevens and Dicken Garcia, Communication History, 43.

28 Albert Rees, "Economics," International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences (United States: Macmillan and Free Press, 1968), vol. 4, 472-485.

29 Christine Ammer and Dean S. Ammer, Dictionary of Business and Economics, (New York: Free Press, 1977), 132.

industrial organization, labor economics, public finance, international economics, consumer economics, welfare economics, and so on. "Newspaper economics," a term employed by Bruce Owen in his Economics and Freedom of Expression,³⁰ is a type of applied research; that is, it is the use of economic concepts and theory to understand the dynamics of a particular industry. Due to the peculiar nature of the newspaper commodity and the newspaper industry, application of such theory has been a challenge, but the area is coming well into its own as the work of John Busterna, among others, has shown.³¹

The history of economics, also referred to as the history of economic thought, economic ideas and economic theory, is the history of "man's attempts to analyze and understand his economic world,"³² a history that ranges from ancient and medieval times to the work done by academic economists today.

The first clarification to be made, then, is that the "history of newspaper economics" would be the history of economic studies of the newspaper, a topic of intellectual history. Such a history would have but thirty years of research to review in journalism.³³ It might explore the relative neglect of the newspaper industry by economists before the important attention given it by James N. Rosse in the

30 Owen, Economics and Freedom, 34.

31 John C. Busterna, "The Cross-Elasticity of Demand For National Newspaper Advertising," Journalism Quarterly 64 (Summer-Autumn 1987): 346-351; Busterna, "Concentration and the Industrial Organization Model," Press Concentration and Monopoly, eds. Robert G. Picard, James P. Winter, Maxwell E. McCombs and Stephen Lacy (Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1988), 35-53; Busterna, "Daily Newspaper Chains and the Antitrust Laws," Journalism Monographs 110 (March 1989).

32 Everett J. Burtt, Jr. Social Perspectives in the History of Economic Theory (New York: St. Martin's, 1972), 1.

33 The article by J. Edward Gerald, "Economic Research and the Mass Media," Journalism Quarterly 35 (Winter 1958): 49-55, 121, seems a significant first.

1960s.³⁴ Broadly conceived, such a history would also include the pre-theoretic work, principally detailing the rise of chain ownership, published in Journalism Quarterly in the 1930s, and the work of nonacademic press critics. None of these is probably what Edwin Emery had in mind as being missing when he, in recounting the writing of the first edition of the Press and America, complained that "in 1950 there was precious little reliable history of . . . media economics."³⁵

The Political Economy of the Newspaper

The area of inquiry known today as economics was from before the day of Adam Smith until well into the nineteenth century called "political economy."³⁶ The term originally meant to signify what it seems to signify: that the science was one pertinent to public administration.³⁷ In his An Inquiry into the Nature and the Causes of the Wealth of Nations, published in 1776, Smith defined the term as "'a branch of the science of a statesman or legislator' with the twofold objectives of providing 'a plentiful revenue or subsistence for the people . . . [and] to supply the state or commonwealth with a

34 See Owen, Economics and Freedom, 196, for a bibliography.

35 Emery, "A Conversation," 21.

36 Although the term "political economy" came into widespread use in the day of Adam Smith, it had been used before, and further, the subject had long been an object of intellectual labor. (See Terrence Hutchinson, Before Adam Smith: The Emergence of Political Economy, 1662-1776 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988).)

37 Dallas W. Smythe, a professional economist well known for his critical research in mass communication, unlike his colleagues, continues to use the term political economy in this sense. See Dallas W. Smythe, "On the Political Economy of Communications," Journalism Quarterly 37 (Autumn, 1960): 563-572; Dallas W. Smythe and Tran Van Dinh, "On Critical and Administrative Research: A New Critical Analysis," Journal of Communication 33 (Summer 1983): 117-127.

revenue sufficient for the publick services'."³⁸ As the social sciences developed in the 1800s, there came to be in political economy, as Edwin Seligman noted, "a clear cut separation between theory and practise."³⁹ The name "economics" obtained favor; British theorist William Stanley Jevons, for one, is reported to have approved of the term "because of convenience and scientific nicety (it matched mathematics, ethics and aesthetics)."⁴⁰ Out of the "political" remnants left behind by the self-consciously theoretical enterprise emerged the disciplines of sociology, political science and policy studies.

Today there are two groups who have reclaimed the mantle of political economy: first, radical economists who are building upon Karl Marx's philosophically grounded critique of bourgeois economics, the crowning achievement of which was Das Kapital, whose subtitle translates as "A Critique of Political Economy"⁴¹; and second, scholars from political science, sociology, economics, and policy studies who in the 1980s, more than a century after the disciplinary

38 Peter Groenewegen, "'Political Economy' and 'Economics,'" The New Palgrave: A Dictionary of Economics, eds. John Eatwell, Murray Milgate and Peter Newman (London: Macmillan, 1987), vol. 3, 904-907.

39 Edwin R.A. Seligman, "Economics--The Discipline of Economics," Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, ed. Edwin R.A. Seligman (New York: Macmillan, 1937), v. 3, 344-346.

40 Groenewegen, "Political Economy," 905.

41 Meghnad Desai, "Political Economy," A Dictionary of Marxist Thought, eds. Tom Bottomore *et al.* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), 375-378; James F. Becker, Marxian Political Economy: An Outline (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 9; and Paul Zarembka, "Foreword," Research in Political Economy, ed. Paul Zarembka (Greenwich, CT: JAI, 1977). Paul A. Attewell articulates a somewhat broader notion of what he calls the "new political economy" in Radical Political Economy Since the Sixties: A Sociology of Knowledge Analysis (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1984).

split, came to the conclusion that it was "no longer realistic to study politics and economics in isolation from each other."⁴²

Within the field of contemporary mass communications research, specifically that stream of research that is Canadian or Canadian-influenced, or British or British-influenced, political economy is considered a "well-established tradition."⁴³ And that tradition, whether conceived narrowly as the study of increasingly monopolistic "structures of ownership and control" in the media industries,⁴⁴ or broadly, as the study of the "economic constraints that limit cultural production under capitalism"⁴⁵ is Marxist, and therefore, historical, specifically, historical materialist.⁴⁶ The history, however, could

37 Norman J. Vig "Introduction: Political Science and Political Economy," Political Economy in Western Democracies, eds. Norman J. Vig and Steven E. Schier (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1985), 3-16. This perspective is seeping into economic history as well. See for example Jennifer Roback, "The Political Economy of Segregation: The Case of Segregated Street Cars," Journal of Economic History 46 (December 1986) 893-917.

43 James Curran, Michael Gurevitch and Janet Woollacott, "The Study of the Media: Theoretical Approaches," Culture, Society and the Media, eds. Michael Gurevitch, Tony Bennett, James Curran and Janet Woollacott (London: Methuen, 1982), 11-29.

44 Curran *et al.*, in Gurevitch *et al.*, Culture, Society, Media, 18. The work of Graham Murdock is a good example of such research. See Murdock and Peter Golding, "For a Political Economy of Mass Communications," The Socialist Register, eds. Ralph Miliband and John Saville (London: Merlin Press, 1974), 205-234; and Murdock, "Large Corporations and the Control of the Communications Industries," in Gurevitch, *et al.*, Culture, Society, Media, 118-150.

45 Eileen Meehan, "Technical Capability Versus Corporate Imperatives: Toward a Political Economy of Cable Television and Information Diversity," The Political Economy of Information, eds. Vincent Mosco and Janet Wasko (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 167-187; Nicholas Garnham, "Contribution to a Political Economy of Mass-Communication," Media, Culture and Society: A Critical Reader, eds. Richard Collins, James Curran, Nicholas Garnham, Philip Schlesinger and Colin Sparks (London: Sage, 1986), 9-32.

46 For a compact statement of historical materialism, considered by Marx to be the "guiding thread" of his and Friedrich Engels' work, see Karl Marx, "Preface" to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy in Robert C. Tucker, ed. The Marx-Engels Reader, 2nd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978), 3-6.

be and often is of the sweeping overview variety, based exclusively on secondary sources.

The second clarification to be made, then, is that the "political economy of the newspaper," narrowly understood, would be the study of the control of the newspaper industry, and broadly understood, would be the study of how the economic contexts in which the newspaper has operated has limited its usefulness as an instrument for freedom.

Political economy is believed to have been introduced into American media studies by Dallas Smythe after he left his post as Chief Economist for the Federal Communications Commission in 1948 and entered academia at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.⁴⁷ Political economic analysis by Americans has principally been focused on film, television, cable and other new media, although Smythe sketched out in one of his best-known works a framework for a political economy of the newspaper.⁴⁸

William Ames and Dwight Teeter were the journalism historians who called for study of the "political economics of communications,"⁴⁹ a reflection of their work in the antebellum and revolutionary press, which had been heavily dependent on patronage by political parties and governments for its financial viability.⁵⁰ Several years later Teeter published an article on "John Dunlap: The Political Economy of a

47 Herbert I. Schiller, "Foreword," Dallas W. Smythe, Dependency Road: Communications, Capitalism, Consciousness, and Canada (Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1981), xvii-xx.

48 Dallas W. Smythe, "Communications: Blindspot of Western Marxism," Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory 1 (Fall, 1977): 1-27.

49 Ames and Teeter, "Politics, Economics," 39.

50 Dwight L. Teeter Jr., "Press Freedom and the Public Printing: Pennsylvania, 1775-1783," Journalism Quarterly 45 (Autumn 1968): 445-451; William E. Ames, A History of the National Intelligencer (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1971).

Printer's Success," in which he argued that one key to this prominent Philadelphia printer's success was "business related to politics, or, as 18th century Americans might have said, 'political economy.'"⁵¹ The etymology of "political economy" reveals this reasoning is not quite correct.⁵²

On the other hand, Robert McChesney's "Sport and Newspaper in the 1920s," one of the papers from the special session on the "Economic History of Journalism," is an example of newspaper research that is correctly termed political economy. This study draws on theories of monopoly capitalism to explain the boom in sports in American culture and in sporting news in American newspapers in the post-World War I era. McChesney argues:

Sport did not become more popular simply due to increased affluence, leisure time and urbanization although these were critical factors. It exploded on the scene in conjunction with dramatic changes in American culture encouraged by corporate capitalism and the accumulation process. Similarly, the newspapers did not increase their treatment of sport from some innate desire to serve the informational or entertainment needs of the public. Rather, newspapers covered sport because it enhanced corporate profitability and provided no editorial dilemmas."⁵³

James Curran's "Capitalism and Control of the Press, 1800-1975," in which he stands on its head the traditional Whig account of the emergence of a "free and independent" press in Victorian England, is another example of the political economy of the newspaper, albeit British. He argues that changes in the legal and fiscal control of the press were deliberate strategies to promote the respectable press

51 Dwight L. Teeter Jr., "John Dunlap: The Political Economy of a Printer's Success," *Journalism Quarterly* (Spring 1975): 3-8, 55.

52 Groenewegen, "Political Economy," 904-907.

53 McChesney, "Sport and Newspaper," 22.

at the expense of the radical press.⁵⁴ Jon Bekken's work on American working-class press is undoubtedly a tilling of the soil for such a history here.⁵⁵

The Economic History of the Newspaper

Many of the early professional economists in America,⁵⁶ those appointed to academic posts in the 1870s and 1880s, had taken their graduate training in Germany, whose reputation "as the land of scholarship,"⁵⁷ particularly economic scholarship, was as the world's best. And not surprisingly, early American economic thought was not lightly in debt to the dominant paradigm of economics in Germany, known as the German Historical School.⁵⁸ This position on economics, considered in the history of economic thought to be a minor one, was a rejection of the ahistorical, acontextual approach of the dominant classical economics. Where classical economics was deductive, generalizing and dedicated to the discovery of laws, the Historical School was inductive, particularistic, and sought to describe the

54 James Curran, "Capitalism and Control of the Press, 1800-1975," Mass Communication and Society, eds. James Curran, Michael Gurevitch and Janet Woollacott (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1977), 195-230. This approach is taken in portions of George Boyce, James Curran and Pauline Wingate, eds. Newspaper History From the 17th Century to the Present Day (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1978), the first survey of British press history in nearly a century.

55 Jon Bekken, "'No Weapon So Powerful': Working-Class Newspapers in the United States," Journal of Communication Inquiry 12 (Summer 1988): 104-119.

56 For an account of the evolution of American social science from a province of genteel amateurs to a province of professional academics see Thomas L. Haskell, The Emergence of Professional Social Science (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977).

57 Joseph Dorfman, "The Rule of the German Historical School in American Economic Thought," The American Economic Review 45 (Supplement) (May 1955):17-28.

58 Juergen Herbst, The German Historical School in American Scholarship (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1965).

historical evolution of the economy.⁵⁹ American economics quickly came around, however, and by 1900 the Classical, Marginalist and Neoclassical positions were well on their way to being the dominant points of view. The historical perspective came to be expressed in American economics in the institutionalist approach, of which a good example is the work of Thorstein Veblen; in sociology, a new discipline to which some economists (including Talcott Parsons) immigrated; and in economic history.⁶⁰

Economic history was a pocketed interest of economics until 1927, when the establishment of the Economic History Review staked out a separate intellectual territory for historically oriented economics, now known as "old-fashioned" or "old" economic history. Principally the scholars took their orientation from history; speaking from this position, Robert Clower argued that "[t]he task of the economic historian is to tell a good story well."⁶¹ For the next forty years, with the exception of an attempted reinvigoration in the movement for an "entrepreneurial history," economic history was a quiet discipline characterized by "a lack of controversy, even intellectual resilience,"⁶² "reserved, accurate monographs"⁶³ and, within the loose

59 Theo Suranyi-Unger, "Economic Thought: The Historical School," International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, ed. David Sills (United States: Macmillan and Free Press, 1968), vol. 4, 454-456; Hanno Hardt, "Communication and Economic Thought: Cultural Imagination in German and American Scholarship," Communication 10 (1988):141-163.

60 Steven A. Sass, "The Entrepreneurial Approach to the History of Business and Businessmen in America," Business and Economic History, ed. Paul Uselding (Urbana: Bureau of Economic and Business Research, University of Illinois, 1978), 2nd Series, vol. 7, 83-98.

61 Robert W. Clower, "Snarks, Quarks, and Other Fictions," Business Enterprise and Economic Change: Essays in Honor of Harold F. Williamson, eds. Louis P. Cain and Paul J. Uselding (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1973), 3-14.

62 N.S.B. Gras, "Economic History in the United States," Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, ed. Edwin R.A. Seligman (New York: Macmillan, 1937), vol. 3, 325-327.

paradigmatic framework of the development of the American economy,⁶⁴ an ever narrowing vision, such that "economic history" came to be a coalition of the "small, semiautonomous subdisciplines" of the history of agriculture, history of business, history of industry, and so on.⁶⁵ Then, in the 1950s, economic growth, "a phrase scarcely even mentioned before," was put onto the agenda of the Economic History Association. As Herbert Heaton later noted, "The Association has never been the same since."⁶⁶

Economic growth became the new bandwagon of economic history. And soon some very strange musicians climbed aboard. In the 1960s, an era in which there was upheaval in a large number of disciplines, economic history was transformed by economic theorists and their "Cliometrics" into the "new" economic history. Although the theorists came armed with sophisticated quantitative methods, they more importantly came with the intellectual goals of abstraction, systematization, and parsimonious causal explanation, all a far cry from the well-documented complex verisimilitude sought by the historian.⁶⁷ Further, the new historians' research interests were exclusively focused on macroeconomic processes, specifically the process of economic growth, in contrast to the "old" historians' more microeconomic interests in economic institutions, and in pursuit of their interest the new

63 Sass, "Entrepreneurial Approach," 84.

64 William N. Parker, "Through Growth and Beyond: Three Decades in Economic and Business History," Business Enterprise and Economic Change: Essays in Honor of Harold F. Williamson, eds. Louis P. Cain and Paul J. Uselding (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1973), 15-47.

65 Sass, "Entrepreneurial Approach," 84-5.

66 Herbert Heaton, "Twenty-five Years of the Economic History Association: A Reflective Evaluation," Journal of Economic History 25 (December 1965): 465-479.

67 David S. Landes, "On Avoiding Babel," Journal of Economic History 38 (March, 1978): 3-12.

economic historians often did not let historical facts get in the way.⁶⁸ Those who have attempted to describe the transformation have found the metaphors of war to be the most accurate. For example, Donald McCloskey, in the good humor of the victor, wrote:

From economic history itself, however, [the new economic history] looked once upon a time like a barbarian invasion, and caused a very great fuss indeed. Barbarous hordes came roaring out of the west (the usual home of intellectual barbarians), calculators thumping on their thighs and computer paper flowing from their packs. Rudely seizing the harvest of the native historians and sticking it into a porridge disgusting to civilised taste, they sat down to feast amidst grunts of 'we hypothesise that the coefficient will be significantly different from zero at the .05 level'. Frightful stuff.⁶⁹

The traditionalists' complaint, primarily, was the ceteris paribus contempt the new economic historians had for history,⁷⁰ a feeling comparable to that traditional journalism historians have expressed about those who have wanted to theorize their discipline.⁷¹ Many of the "old" economic historians took refuge in business history, as an

68 Fritz Redlich, "'New' and Traditional Approaches to Economic History and Their Independence," Journal of Economic History 25 (December, 1965): 480-495. Somewhat muddying this generalization is Lance E. Davis and Douglass C. North's consideration of the role played by the institution of government in Institutional Change and Economic Growth (London: Cambridge University Press, 1971), which led to other work along institutional lines by the new economic historians.

69 Donald N. McCloskey, Econometric History, (Hounds Mills, England: Macmillan, 1987), 15.

70 J.R.T. Hughes, "Fact and Theory in Economic History," The New Economic History: Recent Papers on Methodology, ed. Ralph L. Andreano (New York: John Wiley, 1970), 43-66.

71 Chilton R. Bush criticized Alfred McClung Lee's The Daily Newspaper in America on this count in his review of the book, Journalism Quarterly 14 (September 1937): 270-271. A poignant expression of how traditional historians felt about the reorientation of journalism history to social science in the 1970s was made by Robert S. Kahan in "Historians: Our Critics, Craft and Mental Health," Journalism History 6 (Autumn 1979): 70-72.

alternative to the hara-kiri that the "new" economic historians seemed to be demanding.⁷² The "new" economic history, however, is no longer new (Festachriften already have been written for some of the pioneers⁷³) and is today the mainstream of the discipline.⁷⁴

In light of this upheaval the term "economic history" has changed from meaning history with a general emphasis on things economic to meaning very specifically the history of the economy, especially its growth, investigated from the perspective of macroeconomic theory and characterized by the application of statistical tools (increasingly complex) to the data collected. The third clarification, then, to be made is that the economic history of the newspaper would be, in the fashion of the "w" research, a theoretically guided, heavily quantitative analysis of the newspaper's contribution to the economy. Although traditional economic historians had called attention to the contributions the newspaper industry has made to American economic growth, Harold Innis at some length,⁷⁵ and David Smith in passing,⁷⁶ no detailed "new" economic history studies exploring this hypothesis are known to have been done. The "new" economic history has acknowledged, however, that there is a void in its literature about

72 Redlich, "'New' and Traditional," 494.

73 For example, Douglass North: Roger L. Ransom, Richard Sutch, and Gary M. Walton, eds., Explorations in the New Economic History: Essays in Honor of Douglass C. North (New York: Academic Press, 1981).

74 Alexander J. Field, "The Future of Economic History," The Future of Economic History, ed. Alexander J. Field (Boston: Kluwer-Nijhoff, 1987), 1-41.

75 Harold A. Innis, "The Newspaper in Economic Development," Journal of Economic History 2 (Supplement) (December 1942): 1-33.

76 David C. Smith, "Wood Pulp and Newspapers, 1867-1900," Business History Review, 38 (December 1964): 328-345.

the role of the exchange of information in economic growth, specifically citing as relevant here the newspaper.⁷⁷

Within journalism history, there are three studies that have focused explicitly on the newspaper in economic development and although none is theoretically informed and each uses the traditional literary method, they can properly be categorized as economic history of the newspaper. The first is a study by Ronald Hoffman about the role of the press in the merchant community of Maryland, in which he argues that although the press may have been helpful, convenient, and useful, it was by no means required during his study period, 1760-1785.⁷⁸ The second is a study by J.R. Raven, who argues that in the first half of the eighteenth century, newspapers "contributed significantly to the creation and extension of local marts for goods and services."⁷⁹ The third is a study by Wendell W. Norris of the important role played by weekly newspapers, "often published for Eastern readers who were to be induced, if possible, to become the local readers," in stimulating frontier land booms in the postbellum era.⁸⁰ As Thomas Cochran noted, "[I]n most developing communities beyond the Appalachian Mountains, the local newspaper. . . was an

77 Sidney Ratner, James H. Soltow, and Richard Sylla, The Evolution of the American Economy (New York: Basic Books, 1979) 123. An exception to this is Richard B. DuBoff's work: see, for example, Duboff, "Business Demand and the Development of the telegraph in the United States," 1844-1860," Business History Review 54 (Winter 1980): 459-479; "The Telegraph and the Structure of Markets in the United States," Research in Economic History, ed. Paul Uselding (Greenwood, CT: JAI, 1983) 8:253-277.

78 Ronald Hoffman, "The Press in Mercantile Maryland: A Question of Utility," Journalism Quarterly 46 (Autumn 1969): 536-544.

79 J.R. Raven, "Marts and Early Newspapers in Britain and America," Journal of Newspaper and Periodical History 2 (Spring 1986): 2-8.

75 Wendell W. Norris, "The Transient Frontier Weekly As a Stimulant to Homesteading," Journalism Quarterly 30 (Winter 1953): 44-48.

agency for bringing new business and population to the town, a short of Chamber of Commerce advertising sheet."⁸¹

An economic history of the newspaper, in the traditional fashion, would have detailed the rise of the industry: thus, when Innis published such a work in 1949 he gave it the title, The Press: A Neglected Factor in the Economic History of the Twentieth Century.⁸² For a similar work to be called today the "economic history of the newspaper," as those in journalism seem wont to do,⁸³ is historiographically inapt--and has been for the last twenty years. The history of the industry, as well as the history of the dollars-and-cents side of journalism would more accurately be characterized as business history. Thus business historian Cochran's careful title for his 1975 overview article, "Media as Business: A Brief History."⁸⁴

In the last five years, and forecast for the near future, however, is a rapprochement between economic history and business history, the result of business historians' having broadened their interests and economic historians' having rediscovered business and industry, as well as having grudgingly admitted that in their own peculiar way they do tell stories.⁸⁵ Perhaps there are unsung

81 Thomas C. Cochran, "Media as Business: A Brief History," Journal of Communication 25 (Autumn 1975): 155-156.

82 H. A. Innis, The Press: A Neglected Factor in the Economic History of the Twentieth Century (London: Oxford University Press, 1949).

76 And not just the historians! See, for example, Owen, Economics and Freedom, 61ff; Peter J.S. Dunnett, The World Newspaper Industry (Burrell Row, Croon Helm, 1988), 4-7.

84 Cochran, "Media as Business."

85 This move is evident on the pages of each faction's leading journal, the Business History Review and the Journal of Economic History. For economic history's part see Barry Supple, "Economic History in the 1980s," Journal of Interdisciplinary History 12 (Autumn 1981): 199-205; and William N. Parker, ed. Economic History and the Modern Economist (London: Basil Blackwell, 1986).

benefits to journalism history's wait-and-see posture on historiography!

The Business History of the Newspaper

Business history as a formal academic enterprise has two roots, one as mentioned earlier, in traditional economic history, which conceptualized business as a key institution in the American economy, and the second, in business education, an innovation in the 1920s of Harvard's Graduate School of Business Administration. Thinking along lines that should be very familiar to journalism historians, Wallace B. Donham, then dean of the school, believed that an understanding of how businessmen had managed in the past was necessary for the well-educated businessmen of the future. As Ralph Hidy wrote, "Donham had in mind the use of business history for training prospective business administrators, the utilization of the case method, and the comparison of past techniques, decisions, and their implementation with those of the present."⁸⁶ The innovation involved the creation of a new chair in business history, the founding of a "world-class business library," the famed Baker Library,⁸⁷ the establishment of Business Historical Society, whose aim was to discover and preserve the primary materials necessary for the writing of business history,⁸⁸ and the funding of

86 Ralph W. Hidy, "History: Business History," International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, ed. David L. Sills (United States: Macmillan and Free Press, 1968), vol. 6, 474-480. Other accounts give substantial credit to Edwin S. Gay, and economic historian and the first dean of the business school, for the emphasis on history, and for making a good start on establishing a research library. See: Florence Barthoshesky, "Business Records at the Harvard Business School," Business History Review 59 (Autumn 1985): 475-483.

87 Barthoshesky, "Business Records," 477.

88 The Society's first president, interestingly, was Charles H. Taylor, the long-time manager of the Boston Globe (N.S.B. Gras, "Past,

journals and book series for research and business history.⁸⁹ The discipline's leading journal today, Business History Review, is a descendant of one of these early journals.

The first scholar to fill the new chair in business history was N.S.B. Gras, an ex-patriate economic historian previously inclined towards the study of businessmen. In a subject he came back to again and again, Gras differentiated what he called "the business history of business," "true" business history, from the other business history, the economic history of business,⁹⁰ as history that emphasized the history of "policy, management, and control of business in its various forms,"⁹¹ the "study of the administration of business units in the past,"⁹² administration being both policy formulation and management or execution of policy. Biographies of businessmen, company histories, and industry histories (as company history writ large) comprised most of the early efforts in business history. Against this perspective, Wm. David Sloan's characterization in his historiographic essay on "Historians and the American Press, 1900-1945," of the revisionists who argued that newspaper publishers were not "selfish, conservative profiteers" but rather "individuals of high principle" who "often had made lasting, constructive contributions" as being neo-

Present, and Future of the Business Historical Society," Bulletin of the Business Historical Society 24 (March 1950): 1-12). Gras commented that although Taylor was "an incorrigible collector of various objects, including books and papers on business history," he "had no interest in, or patience with, the intellectual problems connected with business history" (2-3).

89 Hidy, "Business History," 476.

90 Gras, "Past, Present and Future," 9.

91 N.S.B. Gras, "Questions and Answers in Business History," The Bulletin of the Business Historical Society 20 (February 1946): 25-27.

92 N.S.B. Gras and Henrietta M. Larson, Casebook in American Business History (New York: Crofts, 1939), 3.

conservative or "business school" historians is one that skews and belittles the Harvard project.⁹³

Alfred Chandler, author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning history book, The Visible Hand, recalled in 1978 that when he was a graduate student working on his dissertation on the coming of the railroad he and one or two other students crossed the Charles River to speak with Gras. "Gras was pleased to instruct us, but he made it clear that there was only one way to write business history, his way Gras' focus seemed narrow and one-sided. After our discussion I almost decided not to become a business historian."⁹⁴ Lucky for business history, Gras, though influential, had no monopoly on definitions of the discipline, and most of his competitors saw no benefit in cutting business history off from the larger historical enterprise. Arthur Cole, building on economist Joseph A. Schumpeter's ideas about the role of the entrepreneur in economic development, launched the rivalrous research area of "entrepreneurial history" which was theoretically informed, but by sociology and psychology as well as economics.⁹⁵ Fritz Redlich articulated a business history that was more than the reporting of data, more than the telling of a story. It had to be analytical and attempt limited generalization.⁹⁶ Thomas Cochran explored the attitudes and ideas shared by railroad entrepreneurs and managers, and on another track, explored the culture

93 Wm. David Sloan, "Historians and the American Press, 1900-1945: Working Profession or Big Business?" American Journalism 3 (1986): 154-166.

94 Alfred D. Chandler, Jr., "Presidential Address, 1978: Business History--A Personal Experience," Business and Economic History, ed. Paul Uselding, 2nd series, vol. 7, 1-8. Hidy, "Business History," 476, defends Gras as having had a broader vision than most think.

95 Parker, "True Growth," 30.

96 Chandler, "Presidential Address," 4.

of the businessmen and its "ever more dominant" role in the larger American culture, such that by the late nineteenth century "Herbert Spencer spoke of Americans' 'sole interest--the interest in business.'"⁹⁷ And Chandler broadened the focus on decision-making from the content of decisions to the process of decisions, and from the operation of the firm to the structure of the firm, and in The Visible Hand, broadened the focus yet again to consider the functions of the decisions in the economy.⁹⁸

The discipline of business history today is one that is trying to reach out to all of its historical sisters--social history, political history, labor history, technological history, cultural history, and economic history. As Fred Bateman told his colleagues in 1983, "Ours is naturally an interdisciplinary field. . . . Ideally we should seek out our colleagues from the related fields and move into a new, exciting era in the study of American business past."⁹⁹ The fourth clarification, then, to be made is that the business history of the newspaper would be a broad inquiry into the history of the business of newspaper publishing, the process of transforming productive resources into the good and service which is the newspaper. To what extent

97 Thomas C. Cochran, Railroad Leaders, 1845-1890: The Business Mind in Action (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957); Cochran, Business in American Life: A History (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972); Cochran, "Media as Business," 153; Cochran, "Business in American History," America as a Business Civilization (East Lansing, MI: Bureau of Business and Economic Research, Michigan State University, 1962), 63-75..

98 Alfred D. Chandler, Jr. Strategy and Structure: Chapters in the History of the American Industrial Enterprise (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1962); Chandler, Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1977).

99 Fred Bateman, "Presidential Address: Business History in an Era of Economic Transformation," Business and Economic History, ed. Jeremy Atack (Urbana-Champaign: Bureau of Economic and Business Research, University of Illinois), 2nd series, Vol. 12, 1-9.

journalism historians have made progress towards such a history we will explore in the next section.

TAKING STOCK, PLACING ORDERS:

TOWARDS A REVIEW OF THE BUSINESS HISTORY OF THE NEWSPAPER

If one were to make inferences from journalism historians' citations, the business history of the newspaper is to be found between the blue cloth covers of Alfred McClung Lee's The Daily Newspaper in America,¹⁰⁰ now a bit worn, as is fitting for a book published in 1937. Historians' reliance on Lee can be explained by the fact that his work, largely a synthesis of the secondary literature, is detailed and nuanced, covers topics ranging from newsprint to newsboys, is conveniently compact, and--perhaps most important--has not been superseded in the past fifty years by even one comparable study.

But it must be pointed out that Lee's book is not history, although its data are historical. The Daily Newspaper in America should be viewed as an early exercise in the application of ecological theory to a social phenomenon that interested Lee--the daily newspaper. This emphasis is evident in Lee's conclusion:

And thus the evolutionary process works in the industrial field as well as in society as a whole. It represents a vast number of largely unplanned actions, expedient to the individuals involved within the limits of their foresight. This conclusion, "that man has attained his most vaunted victories--his highly acclaimed 'progress'--by clever adjustment

100 Alfred McClung Lee, The Daily Newspaper in America (New York: Macmillan, 1937).

to inevitable life-conditions," is well substantiated by social scientists, but it "is to many minds quite unpalatable. . . . The fact that mind is not all powerful meets the same hesitancy of acceptance that afflicts one who revolts at the thought of animal ancestry or of the derivation of modern institutions from crude prototypes. . . . Thus do our numerous "selfish" adaptations to life conditions blindly lead both the newspaper industry and society as a whole on its unplanned course.¹⁰¹

Further, Lee's focus on dailies distorts the history of the newspaper for until well into the nineteenth century dailies were the exception to the rule in newspapering, most of the population's being served by small weeklies. Lee's theoretical perspective, appropriately termed by David Paul Nord as being that of "Great Forces,"¹⁰² since it was almost a polemic against that of the "Great Men," additionally limits the book's usefulness. And some problems lie in the data themselves. His statistical summaries, though frequently cited, have been critiqued as misleading.¹⁰³

Despite these flaws it is, however, readily ceded that reliance on Lee is better than reliance on S.N.D. North's special report for the 1880 U.S. Census;¹⁰⁴ on the general history textbooks of Frank Luther Mott;¹⁰⁵ and Edwin and Michael Emery;¹⁰⁶ on Michael Schudson's Discovering the News, a combination of literature, myth and heroic

101 Lee, Daily Newspaper, 704.

102 Nord, "Business Values."

103 Dyer, "Economic Dependence," 45, notes that Lee's data, which do "not readily reveal relationships among newspapers, not even morning-evening or daily-weekly combinations," have mislead scholars on the extent of concentration of ownership in the 19th century.

104 S.N.D. North, "History and Present Condition of the Newspaper and Periodical Press in the United States," U.S. Bureau of the Census, Tenth Census (1880), VIII.

105 Frank Luther Mott, American Journalism, 3rd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1962).

106 Edwin Emery and Michael Emery, The Press and America, 4th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1978).

biography;¹⁰⁷ or on the historical sketches done by the economists.¹⁰⁸ But in relying on Lee historians have been overlooking a wealth of narrowly focused studies published in journals, monograph series and books, presented at public conferences, and submitted as theses and dissertations. If journalism history is to be well grounded on issues of the newspaper business, this atomized literature must be located, brought to the attention of historians, criticized and built upon.

The aim of the remainder of this paper is to begin to mine this overlooked wealth by reviewing the articles that have appeared in communication journals and the most pertinent history journal, the Business History Review,¹⁰⁹ within a comprehensive framework grounded in contemporary understandings of business history.

More than one hundred studies were located. (See Appendix.) We have begun with journal articles because our reading of the literature reveals that journalism historians, failing to find recent books on the subject, have turned to Lee instead of making a search of the

107 Michael Schudson, Discovering the News (New York: Basic Books, 1978). For a debate on Schudson's work, see John C. Nerone, "The Myth of the Penny Press," Critical Studies in Mass Communication 4 (1987): 376-404, and responses in the same issue: Schudson, "A Revolution in Historiography," 405-408; Dan Schiller, "Evolutionary Confusion," 409-412; Donald L. Shaw, "Why We Need 'Myths,'" 412-415; John J. Pauly, "The Rest of the Story," 415-419, and Nerone, "On Challenging Ideal Types," 419-422.

108 Owen, Economics and Freedom; Compaine, Who Owns the Media?.

109 The Appendix to this paper lists the research relevant to the development of a new business history of the newspaper located in: American Journalism, Business History Review, Critical Studies in Mass Communication, Communication Research, Journal of Communication, Journal of Communication Inquiry, Journal of Newspaper and Periodical History, Journalism History, Journalism Monographs, Journalism Quarterly, Mass Comm Review, Newspaper Research Journal, and Public Opinion Quarterly. Articles from a few other sources have been included because of their relevance to our analysis of these building blocks for business history. The bibliography focuses on those studies that are based on primary sources, but it includes a section on commentaries, syntheses and reviews of secondary literature.

journals. Although books, theses, dissertations and unpublished convention papers have not been covered in this review, many of them have been read and their systematic evaluation would not change substantially many of the observations that have been made here.

The research published in the journals--with only a few exceptions--was not identified by its authors as being contributions to business history. Rather, there were explorations in social history, political history, regional history, ethnic history and women's history, and all too often there was no orientation at all beyond the narrative at hand. Much of the research, furthermore, had no conceptual focus. The statement of the research question in Paul Peterson's article on the short-lived Chicago Daily Herald provides a classic example of an aconceptual approach: "But how did the paper get started, who were the primary people involved, what special events marked its five months' existence--and, of equal importance, what were the factors that contributed to its demise? Here, briefly, is the story."¹¹⁰ If journalism history is to become a more coherent body of work, a theoretically informed enterprise,¹¹¹ or to forge connections between its findings and the findings of other disciplines,¹¹² the

110 Paul V. Peterson, "The Chicago Daily Herald: Righting the Historical Record," Journalism Quarterly 57 (Winter 1970): 697-701, 710.)

111 See David Paul Nord and Harold L. Nelson, "The Logic of Historical Research," Research Methods in Mass Communication, eds. Guido H. Stempel and Bruce H. Westley (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1981), 302; and Nord, "What We Can Do For Them," 58.

112 Ideally, connections with the larger discipline of business history will be attempted so that the position of the newspaper vis-a-vis other businesses can begin to be articulated. Jack Hart, for example, drawing on data collected by Harvard's Research Center in Entrepreneurial History, was able to show that the editors of the nation's largest daily newspapers in 1875 and 1900 constituted "a socio-economic elite comparable to top industrialists of the same period," and "significantly different from the average American" (Hart, "Horatio Alger in the Newsroom: Social Origins of American

work must be put on a conceptual basis. That is, the work must be driven by concepts, or at a minimum, the studies must have conceptual ambitions and explore the conceptual significance of the empirical findings. Concepts open the door for synthesis, comparison, classification and explanation.

In the following pages a comprehensive framework within which existing research can be evaluated and future research needs located is outlined. The framework operates on three levels of analysis, all of which are embraced in contemporary understandings of the business history of newspapers. They are the individual firm, the newspaper industry, and the environment, or the cultural, political, economic, legal and technological contexts in which the newspaper has operated. Within each level a detailed categorical scheme that serves to locate gaps in the literature has been devised.

The Newspaper Firm

Research at this level of analysis examines newspaper business operations, production and distribution. The largest number of studies reviewed for this article were located at this level of analysis, a result, most likely, of its being the least abstract level of analysis, and, therefore, the most accessible. Not surprisingly, most of the research has been driven by the object of analysis; that

Editors," Journalism Quarterly 53 (Spring 1976): 14-20). And David Paul Nord has argued that editorial positions of Chicago newspapers on such issues as the 1877 railroad strikes, the 1886 movement for an eight-hour work day and the 1894 Pullman strike show that newspaper publishers did not entirely share the dominant laissez-faire business values, due to "the special nature of the newspaper business itself," including its "thoroughly public nature" (Nord "Business Values," 272-273). Edwin Emery has also argued that the newspaper industry's approach to labor-management relations was in sharp contrast to "the belligerent attitude of many other industries" (Emery, "National Controversy Rare in ANPA Labor Relations," Journalism Quarterly 25 (March 1948): 25-32).

is, the aim of the research has been to reveal new data on a specific newspaper or type of newspaper, rather than to contribute knowledge about newspaper business operations. From the perspective of the business history of the newspaper being articulated in this paper the latter orientation is the most valuable; promisingly, it characterizes many of the recent studies.

Organizational Biography

The object of analysis for most of the studies is that of the individual printer, newspaper company, chain or conglomerate. In other words, most of the studies are organizational biographies,¹¹³ such as Thomas Scheiber's history of the W.B. Harris newspaper chain,¹¹⁴ Susan Henry's work on colonial printer Sarah Goddard,¹¹⁵ Dorothy Gile Firebaugh's history of the Sacramento Union,¹¹⁶ and Richard Ruetten's exploration of the role of the Anaconda Company in Montana daily newspaper publishing.¹¹⁷

The drawbacks of this approach to the business history of the newspaper include its tendency to allow a dramatic narrative to crowd out consideration of conceptual issues and its inherent bias against generalization. The organizational biographies found in the journal literature have been both broad (raising for consideration a number of

113 Because in revolutionary and antebellum journalism the organization was often identified with an individual, biographies of printers are included here as well.

114 Thomas J. Scheiber, "The Newspaper Chain of W.B. Harris," Journalism Quarterly 28 (Spring 1951): 219-224.

115 Susan Henry, "Sarah Goddard, Gentlewoman Printer," Journalism Quarterly 57 (Spring 1980): 23-30.

116 Dorothy Gile Firebaugh, "The Sacramento Union: Voice of California, 1851-75," Journalism Quarterly 30 (Summer 1953): 321-330.

117 Richard T. Ruetten, "Anaconda Journalism: The End of an Era," Journalism Quarterly 37 (Winter 1960): 3-12, 104.

issues about business operations, production and distribution) and narrow (investigating a specific issue). The broad inquiries often aim to tell the story of the printer or company's life, but with an emphasis on its business operations. And while such studies typically offer a smorgasboard of highly suggestive data pertinent to business history, there is only one bite of each subject, and rarely are the data probed for conceptual significance. Gretchen Garst Ewing's narrative about how antebellum-era printer Duff Green attempted to maintain editorial and financial control of his paper, the U.S. Telegraph, for example, relates a great deal of information on Green's business, not in analytical terms, such as how he financed the paper's purchase, or his strategies to increase revenue, but rather as particularistic statements of fact.¹¹⁸ Jim Allee Hart's study of the St. Louis Globe-Democrat's political policies and financial struggles over a hundred-year period likewise includes in its narrative details on the financing arrangement of its various purchasers, the prices paid, annual revenue figures, including breakdowns in percentage contributed by advertising and net gains, but the details do not add up to any substantive knowledge about the metropolitan newspaper business.¹¹⁹

The more narrowly focused organizational biographies zero in on limited dimensions of the business operations, production and distribution functions of specific printers, newspaper companies, chains or conglomerates. The narrow approach is an improvement over the broad approach because it lends a context in which issues tend to

118 Gretchen Garst Ewing, "Duff Green, Independent Editor of a Party Press," Journalism Quarterly 54 (Winter 1977): 733-739.

119 Jim Allee Hart, "The Other Newspaper in St. Louis," Journalism Quarterly, 39 (Summer 1962): 324-332.

be investigated rather than just raised. Unfortunately, the depth is not always accompanied by conceptualization and/or attempts at generalization. Richard Ek, for example, gives elaborate detail on the Topeka Daily Central's controversial but profitable gimmick of having a minister edit the paper according to the precepts of Christianity. But nowhere in the paper does he engage in a general discussion about newspaper promotion activities.¹²⁰ And Clifford Weigle thoroughly discusses E.W. Scripps' system of founding newspapers but leaves untouched the significance of this practice as institutionalized entrepreneurship.¹²¹ On the other hand, Donald Ambramoske's study of Victor Lawson's failed enterprise in weekly newspaper publishing, The Chicago Weekly News, argues that the paper's demise in 1895 should be seen as part of a larger phenomenon, the loss of market share by nationally circulated weeklies to improving country weeklies, small dailies, and the increased delivery of metropolitan dailies to rural areas.¹²² And Cathy Packer's research into an episode in 1928 and 1929 in which the International Paper Company, which controlled at least two-thirds of the national newsprint market and was a subsidiary of one of the key players in the power trust, "purchased interests in 14 American newspapers and tried to buy more than a dozen others," is framed in terms of the issue of conglomerate ownership of newspapers.¹²³

120 Richard A. Ek, "The Irony of Sheldon's Newspaper," Journalism Quarterly 51 (Spring 1974): 22-27.

121 Clifford F. Weigle, "The Young Scripps Editor: Keystone of E.W.'s 'System,'" Journalism Quarterly 41 (Summer 1964): 360-366.

122 Victor Lawson and the Chicago Weekly News: A News," Journalism Quarterly, 43 (Spring 1966): 43-48.

123 Cathy Packer, "Conglomerate Newspaper Ownership: International Paper Company, 1928-29," Journalism Quarterly 60 (Autumn 1983): 480-483, 567.

Typological Analysis

The second approach to research at the firm level of analysis is that of exploring the business operations, production and distribution of a specific type of newspaper. Along these lines William Katz has studied the Washington territorial printer (1850-1890);¹²⁴ Armistead Scott Pride and Emma Lou Thornbrough, the Black press;¹²⁵ Peter Parker, the eighteenth century Philadelphia printer;¹²⁶ and John Cameron Sim, the suburban press.¹²⁷ Like those of the biographical approach, typological studies have been both broadly and narrowly focused, conceptual and aconceptual. But unlike the biographical studies the typological studies offer the advantage of generalization.

However, valid and useful generalization requires that the newspaper types be selected with care, a nicety to which researchers to date have paid little attention. Newspapers that may seem to belong to an identifiable group, such as New York City papers in the nineteenth century, may have a greater number of differences among them than relevant similarities, and newspapers that seem quite different may be comparable with respect to their business operations. The "foreign language press," which embraces the prosperous German metropolitan dailies and the most marginal of Serbo-Croatian weeklies,

124 William A. Katz, "The Western Printer and His Publications, 1850-1890," Journalism Quarterly 44 (Winter 1967): 708-714.

125 Armistead Scott Pride, "Negro Newspapers: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow," Journalism Quarterly, 28 (Spring 1951): 179-188; Emma Lou Thornbrough, "American Negro Newspapers, 1880-1914," Business History Review 40 (Winter 1966): 467-490.

126 Peter J. Parker, "The Philadelphia Printer: A Study of an Eighteenth-Century Businessman," Business History Review, 40 (Spring 1966): 24-46.

127 John Cameron Sim, "19th Century Applications of Suburban Newspaper Concepts," Journalism Quarterly 52 (Winter 1975): 627-631.

is a particularly good example. And Scott has suggested that the Black press is most accurately considered in the context of "cause" journalism, or even more generally, of the small newspaper enterprise.¹²⁸

A classification scheme for the newspaper industry that would provide a framework for empirically valid generalizations is a knotty problem deserving of attention. While it is possible that the broad type of "colonial printers" is a valid one and one under which various findings about seventeenth and eighteenth century printers can be synthesized, it is also possible that differentiations should be made between printers in the bustling centers of Philadelphia or Baltimore and the hinterlands. Parker has argued that it is worthwhile to differentiate between colonial and post-Revolutionary printers.¹²⁹ Certainly by the 1830s, the newspaper industry had become segmented, and failing to distinguish among the sectors of the industry is a considerable problem, as we have learned well with respect to the penny press.

Some Directions for Future Research

It is imperative for the articulation of the business history of the newspaper that future research at the firm level of analysis attempt to contribute to the general knowledge of newspaper business operations, production and distribution. Although considerably more research has been done on the firm than on the industrial and environmental levels of analysis, the gaps in our knowledge are quite

128 Scott, "Negro Newspapers," 181. Thornbrough, "American Negro," 473, also noted: "Some of the financial weaknesses of the Negro press were also characteristic of the white weekly press."

129 Parker, "Philadelphia Printer," 40ff.

remarkable. The most valuable research will dig deeply into a specific dimension of newspaper operations. In an attempt to stimulate such research, the key dimensions of the newspaper business and some of the studies that have addressed them are briefly outlined.

Capitalization, Ownership, Organization Structure

Consideration of the business operations of the newspaper could begin with its very foundations, and this is an area of research relatively untouched by journalism historians. Who were the newspaper entrepreneurs and newspaper investors? What role did economic gain, broadly defined, compared with other factors, play at various times in the start-up and investment in newspapers? How much capital was required and how was it raised? When was recapitalization needed or sought and how was it accomplished? What forms of ownership (sole proprietorship, partnership, corporation--private, public) and organization (subsidiary to print shop, independent, chain, conglomerate), characterized newspaper operations at which time periods and with what implications? The mix of ownership types and organizational forms and the evolution of the industry from one predominant structure to others need attention. The industry may have always been made up of a mixture of individually owned and networked papers and we need to know what the structures were and how they functioned and changed. A number of historians have done studies that have begun to provide much needed data on this broad range of issues. Robert Smith's study of an agrarian reform weekly argues that Tom Watson, "a man of means," chose to charge a very low price and to run his paper on the edge of solvency in order to make the paper as widely

available as possible.¹³⁰ Carolyn Stewart Dyer has studied capitalization and ownership forms taken by frontier Wisconsin papers;¹³¹ Ralph Frasca, the manner in which Benjamin Franklin financed and sustained a network of newspapers in the eighteenth century;¹³² and Barbara Cloud, the formation of frontier Washington state newspapers.¹³³ Dyer's research has reported one-quarter of the antebellum Wisconsin newspapers were conducted as parts of groups,¹³⁴ and Carol Sue Humphrey's study showed interconnections among colonial printers through the apprenticeship system.¹³⁵ Ruetten and Packer have looked at conglomerate ownership.¹³⁶

Newsgathering

Newsgathering is the first stage in the production of the newspaper. Key issues to consider include the integration of newsgathering tasks at various times, the organization of the news staff, sources of other content, and the technology used to gather and prepare news for publication. James Carey's comment that journalism is an "industrial art" whose "methods, procedures and canons" were "developed not only to satisfy the demands of the profession but to

130 Robert W. Smith, "The People's Party Paper and Georgia's Tom Watson," Journalism Quarterly 42 (Winter 1965): 110-111.

131 Carolyn Stewart Dyer, "Economic Dependence and Concentration of Ownership among Antebellum Wisconsin Newspapers," Journalism History 7 (Summer 1980): 42-46.

132 Ralph Frasca, "Benjamin Franklin's Printing Network." American Journalism 5:3 (1988), 145-158; Marion Reynolds King, "One Link in the First Newspaper Chain, The South Carolina Gazette," Journalism Quarterly 9 (September 1932): 257-268.

133 Barbara L. Cloud, "A Party Press? Not Just Yet! Political Publishing on the Frontier," Journalism History 7 (Summer 1980) 54-55, 72-73.

134 Dyer, "Concentration of Ownership."

135 Carol Sue Humphrey, "Producers of the 'Popular Engine': New England's Revolutionary Newspaper Printers," American Journalism 4 (1987): 97-117.

136 Ruetten, "Anaconda Journalism"; Packer, "Conglomerate Newspaper."

meet the needs of industry to turn out a mass produced commodity" and whose stylistic devices of the inverted pyramid and 5W leader "are as much a product of industrialization as tin cans," is a related hypothesis to explore.¹³⁷

With a few exceptions, most studies that have addressed any of these subjects to date have done so indirectly or as by-products of efforts to understand other characteristics of news. David Russo, for example, found how correspondents were used for out-of-town news as part of a study of a large body of newspaper content to determine when and under what conditions local news developed in the mid-nineteenth century.¹³⁸ Donald Shaw found changes in the relative dependence on different sources of content in broad exploratory study of a nationwide sample of newspapers over a forty-year period before the Civil War.¹³⁹ Shaw's study also reveals the changing roles of various newsroom employees in the generation of content. Several reports of Richard Kielbowicz' research on the relationship between newspapers and the postal service have explored the economic aspects of gathering news by mail from exchanges and correspondents.¹⁴⁰ Richard Schwarzlose's study of the transatlantic press, a peculiar class of paper which provided digests of American news for European audiences

137 Carey, "Problem," 5.

138 David J. Russo, "The Origins of Local News in the U.S. Country Press, 1840s-1870s," Journalism Monographs 65 (February 1980).

139 Donald Lewis Shaw, "At the Crossroads: Change and Continuity in American Press news 1820-1860," Journalism History 8 (Summer 1981): 38-50.

140 Richard B. Kielbowicz, "News Gathering by Mail in the Age of the Telegraph: Adapting to a New Technology." Technology and Culture 28 (January 1987): 26-41; Kielbowicz, "Newsgathering by Printers' Exchanges Before the Telegraph," Journalism History 9 (Summer 1982): 42-48; Kielbowicz, "Speeding News by Postal Express, 1825-1861: The Public Policy of Privileges for the Press." Social Science Journal 22 (January 1985): 49-63.

and European news for American audiences provides insight into how several New York papers acquired their foreign news in the 1840s.¹⁴¹

Two scholars who have directly addressed newsgathering from a business operations point of view are Ted Curtis Smythe and Schwarzlose. Smythe has studied how a variety of urban daily reporters went about the business of gathering news and the conditions under which they worked at the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁴² There have been no comparable studies on reporters during other periods of American newspaper history; there should be. Schwarzlose's work on the Associated Press and earlier efforts at cooperative newsgathering are among the few articles on the business of getting the news which have been attended to by other journalism historians.¹⁴³

Schwarzlose's studies as well as several have others addressed the adaptation of newspapers to changes in communication and transportation technology to create new or improved content for their papers. A narrowly focused study of Oregon Sentinel "extra" editions in the 1850s and '60s shows how the paper contrived to make efficient use of its relative proximity to the end of the telegraph line in San Francisco and the news it brought from the East.¹⁴⁴ Another study

141 Richard Schwarzlose, "The Foreign Connection: Transatlantic Newspapers in the 1840s," Journalism History 10 (Winter 1983): 44-49, 67.

142 Ted Curtis Smythe, "The Reporter, 1880-1900. Working Conditions and Their Influence on the News," Journalism History 7 (Spring 1980): 1-10.

143 Richard A. Schwarzlose, "Harbor News Association: Formal Origin of the AP," Journalism Quarterly 45 (Summer 1968): 253-260; Schwarzlose, "Early Telegraphic News Dispatches: Forerunner of the AP," Journalism Quarterly 51 (XXX 1974): 595-601; Schwarzlose, "The Nation's First Wire Service: Evidence Supporting a Footnote," Journalism Quarterly 57 (Winter 1980): 555-562.

144 George N. Belknap, "Oregon Sentinel Extras--1858-1864." Pacific Northwest Quarterly 70 (October 1979): 178-180.

explores the business strategies of several California newspapers to gain and maintain a monopoly on out-of-state telegraph news during the 1860s.¹⁴⁵ However, no recent studies have been reported on the use of other technologies--the typewriter, telephone, teletype, and computer, the camera and the wirephoto machine--in the newsgathering business.

There has been little or no historical study of the business aspects of patent insides and syndicates as sources of news since the appearance of Victor Rosewater's and Elmo Scott Watson's books in the 1930s.¹⁴⁶ And virtually nothing has been done in the journals on photojournalism, including the development and organization of newspaper photo staffs, the sources of photographs, and the economic aspects of incorporating photographs, not to mention engravings and earlier graphic content.

Production

On moving out of the newsroom one discovers that the other functions and departments of a newspaper have been given little attention by journalism historians. The almost complete absence of work on the production and distribution of newspapers reflects the bias towards the study of news and those who create it and suggests a class bias in favor of the elite employees of the newspaper, those in the newsroom and management. These are potentially rich fields of study, and mainstream historians in the last twenty years have set good precedents on the study of labor and blue-collar work which journalism historians would do well to emulate in studies of the

145 Robert J. Chandler, "The California News-Telegraph Monopoly, 1860-1870," Southern California Quarterly 58 (Winter 1976): 459-484.

146 Victor Rosewater, The History of Cooperative Newsgathering in the United States (New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, 1930); Elmo Scott Watson, A History of Newspaper Syndicates in the United States 1865-1935 (Chicago, 1936).

organization and differentiation of tasks among typesetters, composing room employees and printers at various stages in the history of the newspaper.

The changes in paper-making, typesetting, and printing technology which figured so prominently in the early technological determinist histories of the newspaper and form the basis for arguments about the rise of the penny press have themselves received little recent attention by journalism historians; Cochran's "Media as Business" provides a brief sketch of these issues.¹⁴⁷ As offset printing and photocomposition pass their twenty-fifth anniversary in the daily newspaper business and computer typesetting approaches its twentieth, it seems to be time for historians to begin to address the business implications of newspapers' adoption of these technologies which radically changed the staffing of the back shop, contributed to the demise of unionization in the newspaper business, and created new opportunities for small circulation newspapers.

The only study we found that addressed the subject of raw materials in any significant way was David Smith's study of wood pulp newsprint,¹⁴⁸ although Peter Knights has done detailed research on the cost of materials for newspapers after the Civil War,¹⁴⁹ and Lorenz's article on early Wisconsin papers discusses the shortage of raw materials as one of many aggravations for frontier printers.¹⁵⁰

Distribution

147 Cochran, "Media as Business."

148 Smith, "Wood Pulp."

149 Peter R. Knights, "The Press Association War of 1866-1867," Journalism Monographs No. 6, December 1967, 3-6.

150 Alfred Lawrence Lorenz, "'Out of Sorts and Out of Cash': Problems of Publishing in Wisconsin Territory, 1833-1848," Journalism History 3 (Summer 1976): 2, 36-39, 63.

Kielbowicz' work on the postal service stands out as the main contribution in recent years to our knowledge about newspaper distribution. In particular he has explored the establishment of lower rates for the mailing of newspapers during the first quarter-century of the republic and the development of the modern second-class mail category for newspapers and magazines.¹⁵¹ Using material from the mass media and popular literature on the myth of the newsboy and government studies and court cases on the employment of children, David E. Whisnant has written one of the few modern studies on the newsboy.¹⁵² Despite the developments in urban history which have considered the migration of people in and out of the cities in the past century, there has been no new work on distribution of newspapers to the public through office pick-up, town delivery, reading rooms and coffee houses, newsstand sales, or car and truck routes. The various means of satellite publishing and distribution developed in the last generation have not attracted historians' interest yet. There is little new on the sales and marketing of newspapers other than a study by Nickieann Fleener on the marketing of the Pittsburgh Courier to Mississippi blacks in 1935.¹⁵³

Advertising, Patronage, Circulation Revenue

151 Richard B. Kielbowicz, "The Press, Post Office and Flow of News in the Early Republic," Journal of the Early Republic 3 (Fall 1983): 255-280; Kielbowicz, "Origins of the Second-Class Mail Category and the Business of Policymaking, 1863-1879," Journalism Monographs 96 (April 1986).

152 David E. Whisnant, "Selling the Gospel News, Or: The Strange Career of Jimmy Brown the Newsboy," Journal of Social History, 5 (Spring 1972): 269-309.

153 Nickieann Fleener, "'Breaking Down Buyer Resistance': Marketing the 1935 Pittsburgh Courier to Mississippi Blacks," Journalism History 13 (Autumn-Winter 1986) 78-85.

As an increasingly important generator of newspaper income over the history of newspaper publishing in this country, the advertising department is in need of considerable attention. Although several recent syntheses of advertising history have been published, neither they nor others have focused much attention on newspaper advertising, its contribution to the income of the firm, the methods of advertising sales, the development of policies on the allocation of space to ads, and the types of ads published. In an unfortunately unique content analysis of the nature of newspaper advertising published in revolutionary Boston newspapers, Mary Ann Yodelis found that newspapers devoted one-third to one-half of their space to ads and that advertising was distributed fairly evenly among competing newspapers until a new paper attracted a disproportionate share over a short period.¹⁵⁴ Daniel W. Pfaff's study of advertising censorship at the St. Louis Post-Dispatch in the 1930s offers a good picture of the business of imposing legal, ethical and moral standards on advertising and suggests the value in dollars and cents of the advertising that was culled out.¹⁵⁵ Linda Lawson has studied "reading notices," the paid ads that looked like news content at the turn of the century, and the adoption of legislation to require that they be identified as advertising.¹⁵⁶

154 Mary Ann Yodelis, "Genteel Rooms, Umbrilloes and Velvet Corks: Advertising in the Boston Press, 1763-1775." Journalism History 3 (Summer 1976): 40-47. See also Yodelis, "Who Paid the Piper? Publishing Economics in Boston, 1763-1775," Journalism Monographs (February 1975) No. 48.

155 Daniel W. Pfaff, "Joseph Pulitzer II and Advertising Censorship, 1929-1939," Journalism Monographs (July 1982) No. 77.

156 Linda Lawson, "Advertisements Masquerading as News in Turn-of-the-Century American Periodicals," American Journalism 5 (1988): 81-96.

The importance of political patronage to the financial well-being of a printing establishment has been the aspect of business operations that has perhaps received the most attention from journalism historians. However, many patronage studies are disappointing to the business historian because they do not give enough attention to this element of the practice. Although it focuses on patronage from the perspective of the sources rather than the recipient and the industry rather than the newspaper firm, Carolyn Stewart Dyer's study of patronage payments to newspapers in antebellum Wisconsin does address the economic aspects of patronage for the firm.¹⁵⁷ William Ames' study of patronage of the Washington, D.C. press during the first sixty years of the republic attends to patronage as business income.¹⁵⁸ Yodelis' study of Boston revolutionary papers determined the relative value of patronage to these papers in comparison with other sources of business and income.¹⁵⁹

The fact that sale of the newspaper often contributes a marginal percentage of revenue is a topic of interest. Oliver Knights has documented E.W. Scripps' efforts to free journalism "from the most debasing kind of commercialism" by establishing an adless paper whose sole source of income was circulation.¹⁶⁰

Personnel

Little work has been done on the personnel practices of newspapers, which would include employee relations, training, the

157 Carolyn Stewart Dyer. "Political Patronage of the Wisconsin Press, 1849-1860: New Perspectives on the Economics of Patronage," Journalism Monographs, No. 109 (February 1989).

158 William E. Ames, "Federal Patronage and the Washington, D.C. Press." Journalism Quarterly 49 (Spring 1972): 22-31.

159 Mary Ann Yodelis, "Who Paid the Piper."

160 Oliver Knight, "Scripps and His Adless Newspaper, The Day Book," Journalism Quarterly 41 (Winter 1964): 51-64.

rates and terms of pay, working conditions, health and safety of employees, the roles of unions, the professionalization of staffs and the demographic characteristics of managers, news workers, and production, distribution, business and advertising employees. Susan Henry has drawn attention to the role of family labor, especially that of women, in both eighteenth and nineteenth century newspaper enterprises.¹⁶¹ Ted Curtis Smythe's study of reporters not only describes the work of journalists, but offers vivid descriptions of their working conditions, exploitive terms of payment and relationships with management at the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁶² The numerous biographies and autobiographies of newspaper editors and publishers suggest material is available for studies on newspaper management comparable to Smythe's article on reporters. Jean Folkerts' and Stephen Lacy's study of weekly editors at the turn of the century shows that weekly editors, who by and large labeled themselves as professionals, were white, married, middle-aged males who were solid members of the middle-class, "neither wealthy nor poor."¹⁶³

For all employee groups there is room for study of their education and training, the development of professionalism and the retraining necessitated by radical changes in technology. Historical study of the unions representing newspaper workers, including the International Typographical Union and its predecessors, the American Newspaper Guild, and pressmen's and drivers' unions certainly offers

161 Susan Henry, "'Dear Companion, Ever-Ref , Co-Worker: ' A Woman's Role in a Media Dynasty," Journalism Quarterly 64 (Summer-Fall 1987): 301-312.; Henry, "Sarah Goddard."

162 Smythe, "Reporter."

163 Jean Folkerts and Stephen Lacy, "Weekly Editors in 1900: A Quantitative Study of Demographic Characteristics," Journalism Quarterly, 64 (Summer/Fall 1987): 429-433.

promise of enriching the understanding of the newspaper industry. No work has been published in the journals on the organizations of newspaper employees, such as the Associated Press Managing Editors, the American Society of Newspaper Editors, the Society of Professional Journalists/Sigma Delta Chi, and those of circulation managers, and other newspaper professionals.

With the exception of some studies on colonial printers, such as Carol Sue Humphrey's collective biography of revolutionary printers¹⁶⁴ and Peter Parker's study of eighteenth-century Philadelphia printers,¹⁶⁵ most of whom were managers as well as printers, and R. Thomas Berner's study of the International Typographical Union's strike newspapers,¹⁶⁶ there has been virtually no study of printers, typesetters, and composers. There has been little recent attention to the relations between their unions and newspaper management, although Edwin Emery's overview of ANPA members' approach is a good beginning.¹⁶⁷ A focus on production workers as employees suggests a particular need to understand how the newspaper business has dealt with health and safety threats posed by work with heavy presses, hot metal, toxic chemicals and other hazards that have been part of the newspaper firm as a workplace at various periods in its history.

The Newspaper Industry

164 Carol Sue Humphrey, "Producers of the 'Popular Engine': New England's Revolutionary Newspaper Printers," American Journalism 4 (1987): 97-117.

165 Parker, "Philadelphia Printer."

166 R. Thomas Berner. "Unitypo: The ITU's Editor and Publisher," American Journalism 2 (1985): 144-164.

167 Emery, "Labor Relations."

Research at this level of analysis examines newspaper firms in terms of both the commonsense and technical definitions of "industry." With respect to the commonsense meaning, an industry is the producers of "a particular range of goods" considered collectively.¹⁶⁸ With respect to the technical meaning, an industry is synonymous with a market; that is, an industry is comprised of firms "competing with each other in the production of a homogenous product."¹⁶⁹ As industrial studies of the first kind both cut across the history of many individual newspapers and require attention to institutions that have traditionally been under-researched by journalism historians--such as the Associated Press, ANPA and state press and editorial associations, and studies of the second kind are premised on economic theory and are not easily rendered in narrative form, it is not surprising that of the studies reviewed for this paper those at this level of analysis were by far the scarcest.

Newspaper Producers

The term "newspaper" embraces a broad range of goods that share in common only the characteristic of being periodically issued ink on paper. The term newspaper is used for a nationally circulated specialized biweekly for farmers as well as for a locally circulated general interest daily. To speak of the newspaper industry, therefore, is actually to speak of a group of sectors. The sector that has generally monopolized the attention of historians has been that of the metropolitan daily. As it was argued earlier, the sectors must be

168 S.E. Stiegeler, ed. Dictionary of Economics and Business, 2nd ed. (Aldershot, Hants, England: Gower, 1985), 200.

169 David W. Pearce, The MIT Dictionary of Modern Economics, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986), 201.

defined by the product produced, which may not be synonymous with divisions of newspapers into groups based on editorial qualities.

With respect to research topics, descriptive and explanatory work on the changing patterns and interrelationships of newspaper industry sectors is desperately needed. As one sector has declined, it is likely that another has risen to take its place or had already arisen to syphon off its subscribers or advertisers. Study of the penny press would best be approached in this manner rather than to treat the papers as representatives of the overly broad sector of daily newspapers during a period when they were unusual rather than typical of the daily newspaper, or worse, as representative of American newspapers, period. Some work on newspaper sectors has already been undertaken. Wendell Norris, for example, has studied whether the frontier weekly, many of which were set up principally for the short-term reaping of revenue from the publishing of homestead claims, distorted the perceived decline of the weekly sector since 1900s.¹⁷⁰ Emma Lou Thornbrough's research on the Negro press before World War I showed, among other things, that a disproportionate number of papers were published in northern states, compared to the distribution of population.¹⁷¹ And Peter R. Knights' study found that for the period 1865-1868 English-language dailies in the "West South Central" and "East South Central" states showed particularly rapid growth, and that there was an increase in papers identified as politically independent, and a striking move to evening publication.¹⁷²

170 Norris, "Transient Weekly."

171 Thornbrough, "Negro Newspapers," 467-472.

172 Peter R. Knights, "'Competition' in the U.S. Daily Newspaper Industry, 1865-68," Journalism Quarterly, 45:473-480, Autumn 1968.

Another area of study to be broached is that of sector-specific institutions within which there were forged industrial identities and through which industry-wide problems were solved. One aspect of the newspaper business' identity as a distinct industry is the fact that representatives of the business have associated themselves together to share information and learn from each other, to work together in pursuit of common objectives such as passing legislation, exerting pressure on other organizations or institutions, or representing a point of view to the general public, and to acquire goods and services collectively. Most clearly serving the industrial interests of newspaper publishers have been a variety of state press or editorial associations, regional newspaper associations and the American Newspaper Publishers' Association. Of these, the ANPA is the only organization about which work has been published in the communication journals. Edwin Emery, for example, studied how the daily newspaper sector worked through the American Newspaper Publishers Association to blunt the demands of labor.¹⁷³

Newspaper Markets

Markets are typically considered in terms of their structure. As William G. Sheperd explains: "A market's structure is comprised mainly of the market shares of its firms and, to a lesser extent, any barriers against new competitors. Each market's structure is somewhere in the range between monopoly (a high market share and entry barrier) and pure competition (low shares and low barriers)."¹⁷⁴ A market is defined by the good or service in question at a particular moment in

173 Edwin Emery, "National Controversy Rare in ANPA Labor Relations," Journalism Quarterly, 25:25-32, March 1948.

174 William G. Shepherd, The Economics of Industrial Organization, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1985), 5.

time within specific geographical parameters. Newspaper economists have called to our attention the fact that the modern newspaper operates simultaneously in markets for circulation and for local and national advertising, and that the patterns of competition are quite complex, with central city paper or papers arcing over many suburban papers and in some instances the suburban papers arcing over yet smaller or more specialized papers. While it is common for other media such as magazines, radio, television, billboard and promotions, etc., to be factored into the newspaper market equation,¹⁷⁵ the validity of this assumption is being probed. Work at this level of analysis requires careful attention to the theoretical literature.

The reasons for the rise of one-newspaper towns in the United States have long been a pressing issue among newspaper economists. And it is one to which historians have much to offer. A single-newspaper market may be a new one in which the single paper is the first or latest to attempt to serve a frontier area, or it may be the survivor of a protracted period of evolution to a monopoly market in the contemporary sense. Competitive markets may involve head-to-head competition by two (or more) comparable newspapers or be much more complex, such as metropolitan areas in which there are one or more dominant urban newspapers which were also distributed in the suburbs and a number of suburban papers each offering competition in part of the metropolitan paper's market. Further, many markets started out as single-newspaper communities and evolved through one or more periods characterized by new, relatively unstable competition, stable head-to-

175 John Dimmick and Eric Rothenbuhler, "The Theory of the Niche: Quantifying Competition Among Media Industries," Journal of Communication 34 (Winter 1984): 103-119.

head competition, declining or terminally unstable competition and monopoly.

The historical study of the newspaper industry has generally failed to address the issue of market structure, but a few studies show promising avenues of inquiry. Cloud's study of Northwest frontier papers is one of few that distinguished the market structure of the papers as a factor in explaining whether the paper was highly partisan.¹⁷⁶ Carolyn Stewart Dyer's study of the party press in Wisconsin has described a nineteenth-century umbrella-like, tiered structure of markets for partisan papers in which the central party organs circulated statewide to some of the same people as county or community party papers.¹⁷⁷ Richard Kielbowicz alludes to tiered markets or umbrella-type competitive markets on a national level in his study of newspaper circulation through the mail.¹⁷⁸ He presents evidence that postal rates for newspapers were set in attempt to protect rural or country newspapers from competition by big-city papers.¹⁷⁹ In his study of the development of local news, David Russo argues that local news may have been developed as a means for smaller community newspapers to compete effectively with weekly editions of metropolitan papers that circulated in their communities.¹⁸⁰ Lawrence Murphy has examined the changing patterns of the daily newspaper market in Philadelphia from 1771 to 1796 and the strategies employed

176 Cloud, "Party Press?" and "Frontier Newspaper."

177 Dyer, "Political Patronage."

178 Kielbowicz, "Press, Post Office."

179 *Id.*, 258.

180 Russo, "Local News," 6.

to eliminate competition by the dominant newspaper, John Dunlap's Packet.¹⁸¹

The Newspaper Environment

Research at this level of analysis explores the complex and dynamic contexts--political, cultural, economic, social, technological, and others--in which newspaper publishing has necessarily operated. However, it must be remembered that while the newspaper business has been shaped by the environment in which it has operated, consideration of this issue must be agile and not mechanical. For the newspaper industry has used its wits and muscle to make its business conditions as ideal as possible, has taken its own path, as Nord has argued,¹⁸² and has had a hand in changing the environment.

At this level of analysis the business history of the newspaper forges links with other specialities in journalism history. With respect to the journal literature reviewed for this article, the only context that has really been explored is the political-legal context.

The Political-Legal Context

The political and legal context in which newspaper publishing has operated has been the most important one, and it has accordingly received the most attention from scholars. The political context has many dimensions, but inarguably the reigning political philosophy of liberal democracy, and the attendant role of the press in it--institutionalized in the First Amendment--must be put first.

181 Lawrence W. Murphy, "John Dunlap's 'Packet' And Its Competitors," Journalism Quarterly 28 (Winter 1951): 58-62.

182 Nord, "Business Values."

Publishers have attempted to advance interpretations of the First Amendment that would exempt them from administrative laws in such areas as antitrust, taxation and labor. Timothy Gleason has described the attempts in the 1930s and 1940s by ANPA's chief legal counsel Elisha Hanson to argue that freedom of the press meant freedom in the business office as well as freedom in the newsroom.¹⁸³ And Margaret Blanchard has documented how the antitrust suit against the Associated Press in the 1940s was a vehicle for the Roosevelt Administration to replace the newspaper industry's "proprietary interpretation" of the First Amendment with an "an interpretation that perceived a need for greater public enlightenment and saw no constitutional bar to government intervention to ensure this enlightenment if newspaper leaders did not become more responsive to the needs of American society."¹⁸⁴

Other laws and policies have had a significant impact on the newspaper industry. James F. Evans has explored how the push to establish additional rural free delivery routes between 1900-1906 resulted in booming business for the Clover Leaf chain of dailies, with RFD circulation representing between 45 and 70 percent of the papers sold.¹⁸⁵

Activities of the press in the fulfillment in various ways of its role in democratic processes have had important implications for the business of newspaper publishing. James Crouthamel's research on the rechartering of the Second Bank of the United States has shown that

- 183 Timothy Gleason, "Legal Advocacy and the First Amendment: Elisha Hanson's Attempt to Create First Amendment Protection for the Business of the Press," American Journalism 3:4 (1986): 195-205.

184 Margaret A. Blanchard, "The Associated Press Antitrust Suit: A Philosophical Clash Over Ownership of First Amendment Rights," Business History Review 61 (Spring 1987): 43-85.

185 James F. Evans, "Clover Leaf: the Good Luck Chain, 1899-1933," Journalism Quarterly, 46 (Autumn 1969): 482-491.

the Courier and Enquirer's position in favor of a modified rechartering resulted in local banks' refusing "their customary accommodation," requiring the paper to seek funds from the Second Bank and to face charges of bribery.¹⁸⁶

The close ties of the press with the political party system constitutes an obvious dimension of the political-legal environment of the newspaper. Alfred Lawrence Lorenz has detailed the stresses that the "treacherous, anything-goes inter-party and intra-party battles which were part and parcel of frontier politics" brought to the business of Wisconsin printer Harrison Reed in the 1830s and 1840s.¹⁸⁷

RAISING WORKING CAPITAL:

A WORD ON SOURCES FOR BUSINESS HISTORY

When explanations have been mounted by journalism historiographers about why despite the obvious need for and value of scholarship on the business history of the newspaper it is a niche that remains to be filled, invariably the principal reason given is the want of records. William Ames and Dwight Teeter, for example, wrote:

Unfortunately, it seems that the more a topic needs study, the harder it is to find the necessary source materials. For example, a 1969 survey of some major manuscript holdings indicated that materials bearing on the economic aspects of mass communications were scarcer than for any other topics. It may be objected that financial data is so hard to come by that exhortations to provide more economic history of the

186 James L. Crouthamel, "Did the Second Bank of the United States Bribe the Press?," Journalism Quarterly 36 (Winter 1959): 35-44.

187 Alfred Lawrence Lorenz, "Harrison Reed: an Editor's Trials on the Wisconsin Frontier," Journalism Quarterly 53 (Autumn 1976): 417-422, 462.

communications media must have a hollow ring. History, it may be said, is the art of the possible, and is possible only where some kind of records survive.¹⁵⁸

The notion that the business history of the newspaper has not been written and cannot be written because of a lack of data is a myth that bears discussion. While it is true that the most common topic of study of the business operations, production and distribution of the newspaper has been that of political patronage because of the availability of financial data in government records, financial records, among other kinds of records, do exist. And where they do not many of the journalism historians whose work has been reviewed above have shown imagination and resourcefulness in plumbing other kinds of data sources.

As those who have picked their way through letter boxes of editors and publishers know, it is not uncommon to find isolated pages of financial and other business records among the folders. Certainly such finds are far from compete sets of an enterprise's books, but in what other circumstances are historians presented with much more than fragments?

Data on topics ranging from capitalization to managerial strategy have been found by attending to traditional sources such as personal papers, newspaper directories, trade journals and the newspapers themselves.

Although it has its limits, historians should not forget the technique of Alfred McClung Lee of carefully mining secondary sources for nuggets of information on the business practices of newspapers. Newspaper and editor and publisher biographies have proven useful. A

188 Ames and Teeter, 40-41.

whole genre of books on the frontier history of various state's newspapers have offered narratives that addressed the business history of newspapers in a broad, impressionistic way, and in the first half of this century, state history journals frequently published articles on individual early papers.

Yet at the same time vigilence should be kept to locate records. Private letters, diaries, scrapbooks, memoirs and the newspapers themselves gave Jim Hart a modicum of information on the financial struggles of the St. Louis Globe-Democrat. But his access to two years' official record books, found "deep in the basement of the St. Louis Courthouse" and "so old their pages crackled and almost disintegrated when handled" revealed a significantly different picture than he had inferred.

CONCLUSION

Journalism historians have long lamented the scarcity of research on the "dollars and cents" of the newspaper. This paper has argued that the history that has principally been called for is properly called the business history of the newspaper. Extrapolating from the principal discipline of business history, an attempt was made to construct a framework for the issues the business history of the newspaper would address. A partial review of the literature, concentrating on the scattered journal articles that historians frequently seem to overlook, revealed that while a substantial amount of work does need to be done in the business history of the newspaper, a body of knowledge on a broad range of the important issues exists and awaits historians' attention, criticism and additions.

APPENDIX
TOWARDS A BIBLIOGRAPHY
OF THE BUSINESS HISTORY OF THE NEWSPAPER

Empirical Studies

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